

Bryan Station Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT

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MISSIONARY

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

"Preaching the True Truth We Preached Before Kentucky Was A State"

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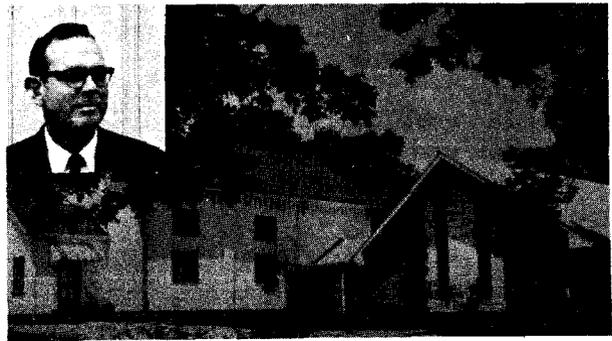
No. 8

THE EFFECTUAL CALL

BY: C. D. COLE

We are about to write upon one of the most neglected truths of the Bible. There was much said about it during the Puritan period, and later by Spurgeon and others, but today there is only a voice here and there dealing with this Bible doctrine. We dare say that nine out of ten church members would not even hazard a guess or opinion concerning this blessed truth.

The word "call" is sometimes used to express the act of naming, as "Thou shalt call his name Jesus" (Matt. 1:21). At other times the word is employed to denote the act of inviting or summoning, as in Luke 14:13: "When thou makest a feast, call the poor...."



Location: 3.3 miles out Bryan Station Road. Right on Briar Hill Road.

- Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
- Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
- Evening Service 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting 7:30 p.m.

Air-Conditioned Nursery Provided

Pastor Alfred M. Gormley
Ph. 299-1430 347 Sierra Drive
Lexington, Ky. 40505

When the word "call" is used for inviting, we must distinguish between a call that is not heeded and one that is successful or effectual--one that is responded to. The chief aim of the gospel is to call men to salvation through faith in Christ. Now it is obvious that many such calls go unheeded, and men remain lost, notwithstanding plain preaching and urgent appeals. On the other hand, we see the preaching of the gospel effective in many cases--we see lives transformed by it. We may see a lost man ignore and reject the gospel at one time, and then the next time or at some later time, he is saved by it. What makes the difference? The preacher? No, for it may be the same preacher in both instances. Is the difference in the gospel? No, for it is the very same gospel in each case. The

difference is made by the Holy Spirit in His light-giving and life-giving power. When the gospel is preached "in word only", that is, without the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, the sinner remains spiritually dead, and will be either indifferent or antagonistic to the gospel call.

The effectual call is just about equivalent to regeneration. In Romans 8:30, we are given the chain of Divine acts in salvation: "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." It is to be noted that "called" is used rather than "regenerated". Christians are often denominated "the called", as well as "the born again".

There are two calls from God to men. One is the general call and goes to all who hear the gospel with the physical organ of hearing; the other is special and effects the salvation of those to whom it is given. Men come into a saved state by this Divine call. Men are saints by calling. Paul addresses the saints at Rome and Corinth as those "called to be saints". Paul preached the gospel indiscriminately to Jews and Greeks at Corinth. To the natural Jew it was a scandal, and to the natural Greek it was foolishness, "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the Wisdom of God." It was only the called among both groups who saw the power and wisdom of God in the plan of salvation through the crucified Christ.

Let us now consider some scriptures that speak of a special and effectual call. In Romans 8:28 we are told that all things work together for good "to them who are called according to his purpose." Here "the called" means more than "the invited", for many are invited to come to Christ who never come and hence are not saved, and to whom all things do not work together for good. In Romans 8:30 we read that the called are also justified. But many are called by the preaching of the gospel who are not justified. Paul is writing about a call that is effectual in salvation when he says to the Corinthians, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." In II Peter 1:10 we are exhorted to make our calling and election sure. In all these passages, calling is more than a mere outward invitation to believe the gospel.

THE NATURE OF THE EFFECTUAL CALL

1. It is a special call. There is a general call whenever and where ever the gospel is preached. God is sincere in this call, and the sinner is responsible to heed it, but the fact is he never does. The special call is something over and beyond the preaching of the gospel. The special call is made to those who are denominated sheep, elect, predestinated, and is always effective. Christ said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (John 10:27, 28). And speaking of the lost sheep among the Gentiles, He said, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice" (John 10:16). Paul recognized the elect when the Gospel came not unto them in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost (I Thess. 1:5).

A good illustration between the difference of the general call and the special call is by the barnyard hen. She has a general cluck to which little attention is given, and she has a special cluck for her biddies when the hawk is about to swoop down upon them--the cluck that brings them flying to find protection under her wings. So God has a special call that brings His lost sheep to find shelter and safety beneath the spreading wings of Calvary.

Spurgeon finds an illustration of this special call in the physical resurrection of Lazarus. He says that if our Lord had not addressed Lazarus personally, saying, "Lazarus come forth," all the dead would have lived at His command.

Our Lord makes a distinction between the spiritual and physical resurrection in John 5:25, 28. He is speaking of the spiritual resurrection when He says: "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." He is speaking of the bodily resurrection when He says: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves, shall hear his voice, And shall come forth...."

2. It is a miraculous and invincible call. Peter says it is a call out of darkness into his marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). Christ says that it is a call that makes the dead to live. This call has the power of God behind it. It is the mighty Spirit of God working in grace to make the sinner see his helpless state and the value of the blood of Christ. To successfully resist his call would mean that the sinner is mightier than God. There was death and corruption in Lazarus to keep him from responding to Christ's command to come forth. But there was power from God that overcame all natural obstacles. There is likewise much in the sinner to resist the Gospel call, but in the effectual call of the Spirit this resistance is overcome. The effectual call is a Divine call that startles the careless sinner into concern; a call that enlightens the sin-darkened understanding; a call that opens the sin-closed heart to receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. Apart from the work of the Spirit, the word of the Spirit will be rejected. Unless the Holy Spirit creates light within the soul, the light within the Book will not be seen. The power of conversion is not in the inspiration or perspiration of the preacher, but in the illumination and regeneration of the Spirit.

The outward call of the Gospel by the preacher may be likened to the law indicting the criminal and calling him to trial; the special call is the sheriff coming in contact with the criminal, arresting him and bringing him into court. The criminal's refusal to submit to arrest is no proof that he is superior to the law; but if the law is unable to bring him into court, that would be proof that he is stronger than the law. Now when the preacher calls upon sinners to repent and believe the gospel and they refuse, this does not indicate that the sinner is stronger than God. But if the Holy Spirit calls him--comes to grip with his darkened mind to give light--comes to work repentance and faith in him--comes to give him a new birth--and does not succeed, then that would be proof that the sinner was stronger than God, the Holy Spirit. Human depravity is too much for the preacher, but not too much for the Holy Spirit. This is why we pray for God to convert the sinner when we have preached to him.

The general call is like the father calling Johnny to get up early in the morning.

He says "okay doke", turns over and goes back to sleep. The call did not bring him out; it had no effect on him. The special call is the father coming in thirty minutes later. He pulls the cover off and puts on the cowhide. This is effectual and brings Johnny out.

B. H. Carroll likens the general call to sheet lightning which is beautiful and grand, but strikes nothing; the special call is like forked lightning, it strikes somewhere.

THE NECESSITY OF THE EFFECTUAL CALL

Human depravity, the condition of fallen human nature, makes a special and supernatural call necessary for the conversion of the sinner. Man by nature has his understanding darkened by sin, his heart is hard, and his mind is enmity against God. He must undergo a change of mind and heart before he will receive Christ as Lord and Saviour, and this change is not self-wrought, but God-wrought. Paul told Timothy to preach in the hope that "God peradventure will give them repentance (change of mind) to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (II Tim. 2:24-26).

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